The Story of Brownsmead:
The Northernmost Community in Oregon

By Rea Raihala Christoffersson

If you want to spark a lively discussion among people from Brownsmead, just ask, "How big is Brownsmead and where are its borders?" There are no authoritative answers to these questions, but you will get many opinions.

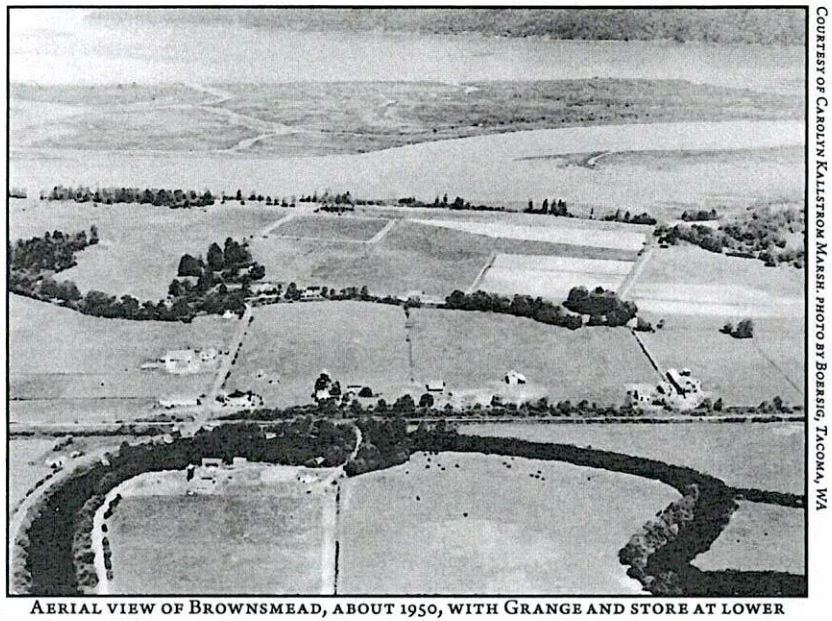
Most residents agree that Brownsmead is located at the northernmost tip of Oregon, about sixteen miles east of Astoria. It is an unincorporated hamlet, irregular in shape, with no official boundaries. At a rough estimate, Brownsmead is bounded on the north by the Columbia River, the south by Highway 30, the east by a ridge of hills bordering Clifton, and on the west, where the Ziak-Gnat Creek Road curves to meet Knappa Dock Road. Brownsmead covers about five square miles—or maybe a bit more when the tide is out.

Early history

The earliest humans to pass through the Brownsmead area liked to hunt and fish, just as many current residents do. The first visitors probably came across a land bridge from Asia via Alaska, followed by more waves of early people who arrived by land and sea. Researchers in southern Oregon have found evidence of humans dating back almost 15,000 years. Excavations turned up projectiles, along with the bones of birds, mammals, and fish.

The Cathlamet, Chinook, and Clatsop peoples lived around Brownsmead before European explorers arrived. Captain William Clark reported that the Lewis and Clark expedition visited a native settlement in the Brownsmead area called "Calt-har-mar Village of nine large wood houses on a handsom elivated Situation near the foot of a Spur of the High land...We purchased Some green fish, & wa pa to for which we gave Immoderate price's." These people were most likely Cathlamet natives who later moved across to Washington after their village was decimated by disease.

On November 26, 1805 Lewis and Clark crossed the Columbia from the Washington to the Oregon side, probably near the mouth of Blind Slough, according to Rex Ziak in his book, *In Full View*. Seeking quiet waters for their canoes, Clark wrote that the expedition "passed between two Islands to the main Shore, and proceeded down the South Side."



Courtesy of Carolyn Kallstrom Marsh. photo by Boersig, Tacoma, WA

Aerial view of Brownsmead, about 1950, with Grange and store at lower left and Columbia River at the top. photo by Boersig, Tacoma, WA

Running aground on the shifting sandbars of the Columbia also has a long history. An early settler from Astoria, traveling upstream on the Columbia, had a boating accident about where Brownsmead is located now. He reported, "...the wind and swells drove us on a sandbank where we stuck fast...Down came the mast, sail, and rigging about our ears...having, however, got all put to rights again, we hoisted sail once more, [then] passed Puget's Island..."

The Hill Country and the Island

Brownsmead has two distinct sections—lowlands, often called "The Island," noted for farming, and higher ground called "The Hill Country" noted for logging. The waters around Brownsmead offer many places to fish.

The Hill Country was settled first, and some of that land was sub-divided under President Ulysses S. Grant in the 1870s. By 1910 there were twenty-nine families with Finnish-born parents and fifty-three unmarried immigrants in the area.

Dikes formed new land

The first dikes to turn Brownsmead's marshlands into fertile farmland were built by

W. G. Brown, a Portland engineer with Brown and Jones, a firm which had also diked Tenasillahe Island further up the Columbia. During 1915-16 Brown diked some 1,500 acres and installed the first tide-boxes. These gates let water drain from the land into the sloughs, but prevented it from flowing back. The diked land attracted settlers, particularly from the Nordic countries and The Netherlands.

The dikes were fifteen feet above mean low tide, were thirty feet wide at the base and eight feet wide at the top. The cost of the project was $39,500 and taxes of varying amounts were levied until the debt was paid off. Brownsmead residents formed Drainage District #1 in 1915 to maintain and protect the dikes.

There was a serious dike breach in 1936, and in 1937 the U.S. Corps of Engineers strengthened the dikes on the Columbia River side. A sand fill at Aldrich Point (the northern tip of Brownsmead) connected the Island with the mainland. Float houses were once moored at the point, and then it became a sandy beach where children learned to swim and attended Sunday school picnics. Now it has a pier for boats and fishing.

What's in a name?

The entire Brownsmead area was originally called Blind Slough. In 1901 the Albert post office and store were established near the juncture of Aldrich Point and Brownsmead Dike Roads and the area was called Albert after Albert Borglund, the first postmaster. Albert also had sawmill and a hotel for loggers. After the post office closed in 1913, the community took the name of Brodie, and in 1920 the name was changed to Brownsmead.

The early residents of Brownsmead often traveled around by boat because there were few roads. The main waterways were Blind Slough, Gnat Creek, and Saspal Slough. Little by little, roads appeared and the first automobile bridge over Blind Slough was completed in 1939.

The nearest thing to a "town center" in Brownsmead is the Grange Crossing, near the former train station, the Grange hall, and the old Brownsmead general store. The railroad and three main roads come together at this point.

Logging

The hill country was heavily logged between 1890 and 1930, but logging, especially on private land, continued into the 1950s.

In the early days, logs were brought out of the wooded hills on short logging railroads. The oldest logging company was Kelly Logging Company run by Dave Kelly who logged Davis Ridge near Sylvandale Road. Their logging railroad ran down the hill, along Davis Bottom, to a dump near the current fishermen's warehouse. Palmer-Libby logged further out toward Aldrich Point, and their rail line ran to a log dump near Brownsmead Dike Road.

Larkin and Green was a very large logging company incorporated in 1912. By 1914, it employed 300 workers. Their railroad ran from Clatsop Crest to Gnat Creek, and across bottom land near the Gnat Creek Bridge, to a log dump near the mouth of the creek.

This logging company ordered supplies from a general store at Blind Slough. The store, founded by C. A. Webster, was operated by Matt Raihala after 1916. Two launches, run by Matt's teen-aged sons, Reno and Willie, brought provisions from Astoria, through Blind Slough up Gnat Creek to the logging camps.

After World War II, logs were transported by road on log trucks; they were then dumped into Gnat Creek at a point across from where the Larkin and Green railroad dump once stood. This operation was fun to watch because the logs made a loud rumble as they rolled down a ramp and a giant splash when they landed in the water. From this point, the logs were formed into rafts for distribution.

Farming

Cabbage and onions were important crops for early Brownsmead farmers. Beginning in the 1930s, Brownsmead peas and corn became famous. Peas were shipped by truck or train to Portland and Seaside. The peas, called Tall Telephone peas, could grow fourteen feet tall and were often supported by fishermen's netting, stretched between poles. Carl Aarnio once recalled that these pea pods were very long and each contained nine or ten peas.

An annual Brownsmead corn feed was started as a thank-you to the Astoria Kiwanis club for luncheons they had served to Brownsmead Grange members. This simple corn dinner grew into a popular annual fund-raiser that is still held to this day.

Brownsmead was also known for dairy farming. A family named Sture started one of the earliest dairy farms on Gerttula Road. John Gerttula acquired this farm and passed it to his son, Jalmar, and grandson, Richard. It was later bought by Joe Rohne, and is now operated by Joe's son, Dirk and his family.

Gillnet fishing

Many commercial gillnet fishermen lived in Brownsmead because Blind Slough provided quick access to the Columbia River. Boats were moored in Blind Slough and Gnat Creek, often near the homes of their owners. Some of the fishermen lived in floating homes called "float houses" while others lived on land.

Several fishermen lived in a scow community by Penttila Lane. This moorage also had two bluestone tanks (for treating nets with a copper sulphate preservative), net racks (for drying and repairing nets), and a floating gas shack which dispensed boat gas. A system of boom-sticks, walkways, and gangplanks bound the whole flotilla together and provided access to the land.

Railway buildings

In 1898, the Portland-Astoria railroad was completed. The Spokane Portland and Seattle Railway came to Brownsmead starting in 1917 and became part of Burlington Northern in 1970.

There was a small railway station building in Brownsmead, and a bridge-tender's house in Blind Slough. The bridge tender closed the railroad bridge for trains to use, and opened it for the passage of boats with high masts or during very high tides. The railroad tracks are still there, but passenger service ceased in the 1950s. After trains no longer stopped in Brownsmead, they would still pick up sacks of outgoing mail that were hung from a bracket and grabbed by a device on the train as it rolled by.

In 2005-6, to celebrate the Bi-Centennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition, a special excursion train passed through Brownsmead on its way from Portland to Astoria.

Brownsmead Grange

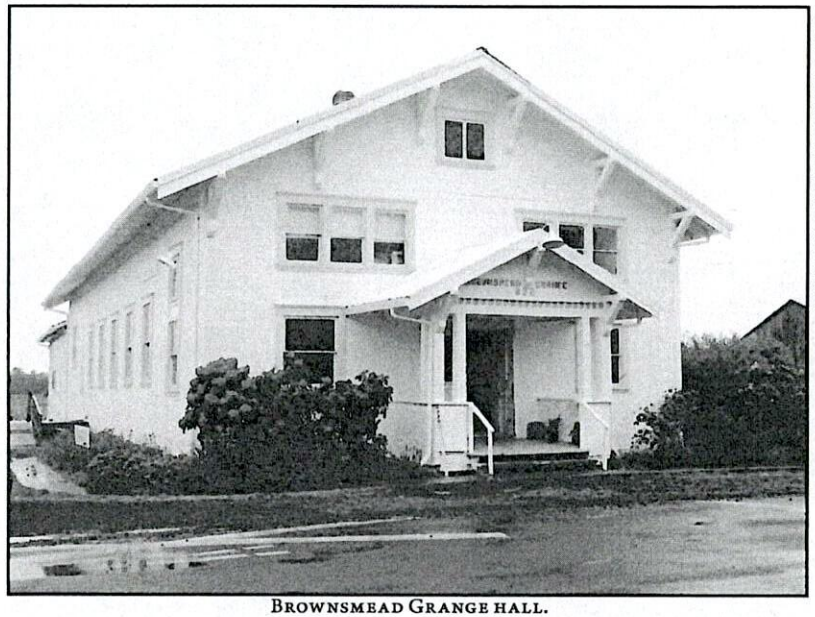
In 1918, a group of farmers organized the Brownsmead Farmers Club. The members raised nearly $300 toward building a community hall, which was first constructed during 1918-19. In 1920 a severe windstorm blew the building off its foundation and twisted it out of shape.

The resourceful farmers built new foundation posts and inched the building into place. Using stump pullers, they wrenched the building back into its original shape, and it is still in use.

The Brownsmead Grange (No. 822) superseded the Farmers Club and was formally organized in 1934. The Grange brought agricultural information to its members, supported 4-H clubs for Brownsmead youth, and sponsored other community activities. It also became responsible for the upkeep of the hall.

The original officers of the Brownsmead Grange were Willem DeJong, Peter Barendse, Anna Emken, A. Sorensen, Aksel Jensen, Fred Rudat, George Emken, Leonard Allen, Dorothy Rudat, Audrey Petersen, Annie Anderson, and Maaike DeJong.

Over the years, the grange hall has hosted dances, Sadie Hawkins celebrations, Sunday school programs, basketball games, turkey shoots, fund-raising bazaars, potlucks, rummage sales, anniversary



Courtesy of Rea Raihala Christofferson

Brownsmead Grange hall.

celebrations, and the annual corn feed. At various times, the building has been home to a co-operative nursery school and the Brownsmead Historical Society, founded by Jon Westerholm.

Brownsmead schools

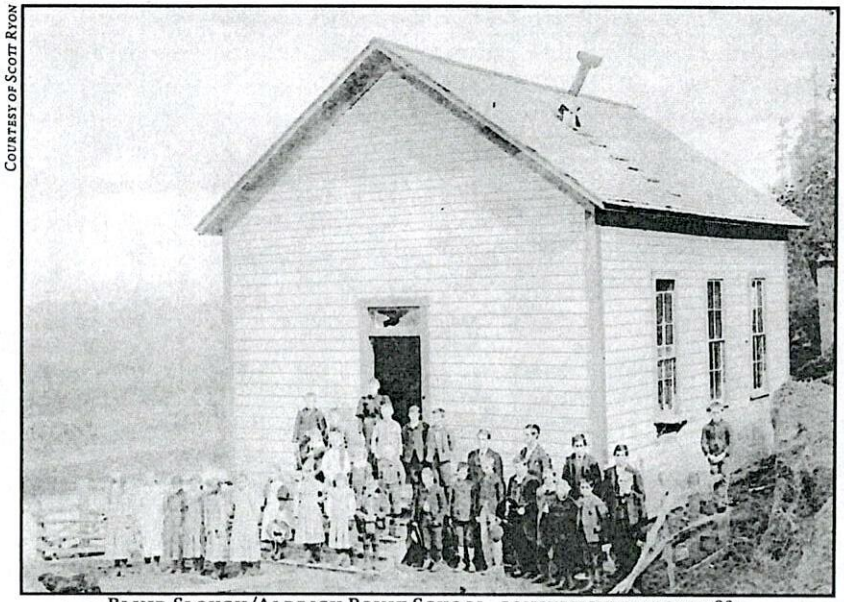
Before schools were consolidated just after World War II, Brownsmead had three one and two-room school houses. These schools began by meeting in homes before school buildings were constructed.

In 1887, the first school, the Blind Slough/Aldrich Point School (Blind Slough School District #23) was built near the Albert post office site. The school building was located by the upper reaches of Blind Slough so students could travel to school by land or water. The school building burned in 1902, but was probably rebuilt as it merged with Sylvandale in 1929.

In 1898-9, the second school was built on Davis Bottom/Sylvandale Road (SD #9). In 1916 this school adopted the name "Sylvandale", appropriate to its setting in a wooded valley.

In 1917, the third school (SD #39) was built on Rudat Road near the present Brownsmead Grange hall. The first school teacher's salary was $65 per month, which covered both teaching and janitorial work. In 1925, a two-room structure was added to the site and the original building became a gymnasium.

In 1939, Sylvandale consolidated with the Knappa School District, followed by the Brownsmead school in 1947. The Sylvandale schoolhouse



COURTESY OF SCOTT RYON

BLIND SLOUGH/ALDRICH POINT SCHOOL, CONSTRUCTED ABOUT 1887.

still stands on property owned by Alice Oja Nielsen and is being restored by her daughter, Rebecca Nielsen. The Brownsmead school's first building became a cattle-feeding station, and the top part of the newer schoolhouse became part of the general store.

BROWNSMEAD STORES AND POST OFFICES

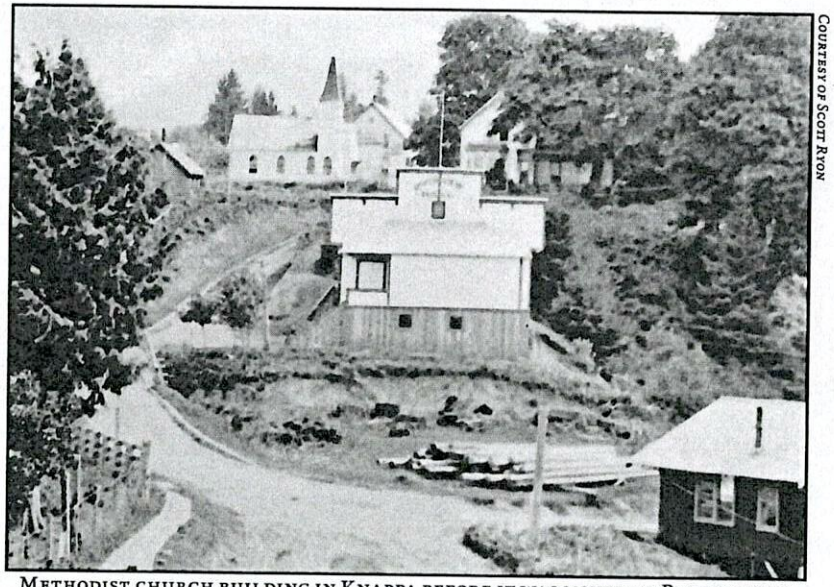
Before Brownsmead had a store of its own, residents had to go along a trail over a hill to C. A. Webster's store in Stringtown, a Knappa community near Old Highway 30.

The Albert store and post office, at the corner of Aldrich Point and Brownsmead Dike Roads, was built in 1901. The post office was closed in 1913, but the building still stands and is now a residence.

The Blind Slough store was founded by C. A. Webster and a partner Fred Young at the north end of the Blind Slough rail bridge. Matt Raihala bought that store in 1916 and his daughter Ellen worked there as a clerk. Later, Matt moved the building to the dike near the Gnat Creek Bridge, where it served until the 1950s as a net storage shed.

The Brodie store was also started by C. A. Webster and Fred Young south of the train station. The community's name changed to Brownsmead in 1920, and the store burned in 1925.

After the fire a new Brownsmead store was founded by Fred Young in an old cheese factory south of the railroad tracks. This store had a succession of owners: Jack Nelman, Matt Koski, and two female part-



COURTESY OF SCOTT RYON

METHODIST CHURCH BUILDING IN KNAPPA BEFORE IT WAS MOVED TO BROWNSMEAD IN 1925 TO BECOME THE IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH.

ners, Ernestine Hart and Byrnedeen Earsley. The women owned the store when Prohibition ended in 1933, and they opened a saloon on the south side of the store.

In 1939, Roy and Gertrude Wharton took over the Brownsmead store and moved the business over the railroad tracks, across from the Grange hall. In 1948, part of the old Brownsmead school building was used to expand the store.

In the 1950s, this Brownsmead store was filled with light from the big, original schoolhouse windows. To the right of the entry was the hardware and marine supply section. There were bins filled with galvanized nails. Shovels stood against the wall and hip boots and fishermen's rubber pick-up aprons hung overhead. At the back of the building was a small post office with a grilled window and post boxes with combination locks.

The food section to the left had a variety of canned and packaged goods, fresh vegetables and fruits, dairy products, with a butcher shop at the back. Gust Anderson was the butcher. Behind the store were freezer lockers, where families could rent individual storage spaces in a commercial-sized cold storage building to store their frozen fish, game, sides of beef, and produce. The cashier counter was in the middle of the store and customers could have their purchases recorded by hand in a personal charge book and settle their account later.

The post office at the back of the store had a grilled window and post boxes with combination locks. The

Whartons lived behind the post office, and had a unique piece of furniture in their home—a seat from a railway carriage. It had a movable back so you could sit facing one direction, then shift the back and face the opposite way.

The Wharton's were succeeded by the Campbells, the Alberts, and Mrs Pine. The post office closed in 1976 and the store went out of business. However, the store building was re-purposed once again to become a residence, which is still standing.

Fishermen's Warehouse

In 1928, the fishermen's warehouse was built by the Union Cannery which sold fourteen shares to local fishermen. It had boat hoist where gillnet boats could be painted and repaired. There was also a large interior, smelling of wood, twine, and creosote, which offered a place for storing and working on fishnets. The warehouse still stands today, but is no longer in use.(See photo on back cover of the Fall 2021 *Cumtux*)

Brownsmead Lutheran Church

Brownsmead was such a Finnish community that I was in high school during the 1960s before I realized that not all grandmas spoke Finnish. The Brownsmead Church was central to this Finnish community for decades.

In 1914, twenty-five people of Finnish descent first gathered at the home of Henry and Hanna Lahti to sign a charter forming the Blind Slough Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Suomi Synod. (This synod was founded by Finnish immigrants in Calumet, Michigan, and established Suomi College there, later called Finlandia University.)

For ten years, the Brownsmead church group met in the homes of its members. From 1914 to 1919, D.J. Elm was the first pastor to serve the congregation. He came to Brownsmead from Astoria to hold services once a month, traveling by train and boat. In 1922 Arvo Korhonen became the visiting pastor.

In 1925 the congregation purchased the Methodist church building, located on a hill above the Knappa docks, for $125. The members took the building apart and Jalmar Gerttula hauled it by truck to a piece of land on Aldrich Point Road donated by Elias Michelson. The church was dedicated that spring. Through the following years, services were conducted by visiting pastors.

About 1944 at John Polso's funeral, Pastor F. W. Kaskinen (who also served as pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Astoria), realized that many of those attending did not understand Finnish, so he also spoke in English. After this, services were given in both languages for a time.

Courtesy of Jean Estoos

Immanuel Lutheran Church congregation, late 1950s.

Up until 1945, the church was called Brownsmead Lutheran Church and then it became Immanuel Lutheran Church. The first wedding was held in the church in 1946 when Joyce Gerttula married Vern Vinson. Joyce remained an active member of the congregation for much of her life.

Immanuel Lutheran had a very active congregation. Over the years, hundreds of volunteers painted the church, taught Sunday School, served refreshments, and performed many other duties. Over time there were at least ten pianists and organists. At its peak, there were twenty members of the choir, twenty-five to thirty in the junior choir, and almost 150 in the Sunday school.

It is impossible to list all the volunteers, but these are some of the stalwarts: Virginia Estoos, a former teacher, taught the youngest children in Sunday school. Hilda Kallstrom and Helen Fowser provided flowers for the sanctuary, and Helen also hand-embroidered the altar cloths and the pastoral stoles. Ella Simonsen played the organ for church services. Carolyn Kallstrom Marsh helped to clean the church. Judy Aarnio Branthover played piano for the choir, and Howard Fowser lent his strong voice. Roy Salmi was often an usher. Lila Raihala served as church secretary.

There was also an active Ladies' Aid Society which was responsible for many community projects and for organizing legendary church basement potlucks where hot casseroles, open-faced sandwiches, and Jell-o salads were staples.

Many different pastors served the Brownsmead church over the years:

D. J. Elm,.....1914–20
Arvo Korhonen.....1922–32.
F. W. Kaskinen 1943–52
Marvin Pekkala 1953–57
Donald Koponen.....1957–59
C. Thomas Kangas.....1959–62
Wilton Anderson.....1962–65
Marlin Larson 1965–70
Pastor William Brooks.....1970–83
H. (Bud) Coates 1983–88
Louis Schneider.....1989–94
Lisa Dahlen.....1996–97
Carl Hansen.....2001–04

Theology students from Pacific Lutheran College also filled in at the church.

Marvin Pekkala was the first resident pastor. As a young man fresh out of seminary, Pastor Pekkala drew many children and young adults into the church. He expanded activities to include both a senior and junior choir, an active Luther League for teens that offered hayrides, taffy pulls and other activities, confirmation classes, and vacation Bible school. He lived in a hillside parsonage south of the church on Aldrich Point Road and had a blond cocker spaniel named Taffy.

In 1957, Donald Koponen took his place. He and future pastors up until 1965 lived in a parsonage across the railroad tracks from the grange hall. Pastor Koponen was very musical, loved to sing, and his wife, Joy, played the piano. He presided over Sunday School programs that were so large they had to be held at the grange hall. He helped the church adopt a new, difficult musical liturgy to prepare the congregation to join the Lutheran Church in America.

In 1959, Pastor Koponen was replaced by C. Thomas Kangas. Although these first three resident pastors all had Finnish names, none of them spoke Finnish. By the 1950s the congregation had become more diverse, and many second- and third-generation Finnish parishioners could no longer speak Finnish. However, a visiting pastor still came occasionally to present services in Finnish.

From Bunk-House to Sunday School

During the 1950s, the Baby Boom hit Brownsmead and the Sunday school outgrew the church's lower level. Sunday school rooms had been improvised with wires near the ceiling supporting fabric curtains to separate classes. Because this part of the church was also used as a kitchen, choir-robing room, storage area, and gathering place for church social hours, the space was getting severely over-crowded.

Courtesy of Jean Estoos

Immanuel Lutheran Church junior choir, 1950s.

To remedy the overcrowding, the congregation acquired a wooden bunk-house from the Kaboth seining operation to use as a Sunday school. Getting the building from the middle of the Columbia River to Brownsmead took a large group of people working in concert. Finns have a long tradition of moving and re-purposing buildings, so several Brownsmead fishermen in their gillnet boats joined together to tow the bunk-house from its Columbia River location up through Blind Slough, and into Gnat Creek. This required coordination, bridge openings, and a close eye on the tide table.

Then the land-based moving team took over. They transferred the bunk house from water to land near the fishermen's warehouse. They moved the building by truck to its new home next to the Immanuel Lutheran church. Bunk rooms were transformed into classrooms, and a large open space (which may have once been a dining area) became a chapel for Sunday School services and home to a small children's library.

In 1962 the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church merged with several other bodies to form the Lutheran Church in America. In 1968 a new Immanuel Lutheran church building was constructed

on Valley Creek Lane, just off Highway 30 in Knappa, on land donated by Francis Bagley and Eilene Cheuvront. The old church building was dismantled.

Between 1970 and 1983 William Brooks became the longest-serving pastor at the church.

After Pastor Brooks retired, William "Bud" Coates replaced him. He and his family energized the youth programs at the church. Pastor Coates was followed by, Lou Schneider, Lisa Dahlen, and the final pastor, Carl Hansen, who served from 2001 to 2004.

The congregation of the small church had dwindled over the years and the church struggled financially. In 2004 they made the difficult decision to merge with First Lutheran Church in Astoria. For a time, First Lutheran maintained the Knappa building using it as a preschool and for local events such as funerals.

The church bell

The church bell from Immanuel Lutheran has a story of its own. It was made by the C. S. Bell company in Hillsboro, Ohio, and weighed approximately 600 pounds. It first rang in the church around 1890 when the building still served as a Methodist church.

When the Methodist building moved to Brownsmead in 1925, the bell went with it. It was attached to a sturdy hand-pulled rope and rang out vigorously at the start of church services. The bell moved again to the new Knappa building where it hung in a structure built by Leonard J. Allen, a local contractor and long-time church member.

Eventually the bell tower developed structural problems and the bell was put into storage. It then was moved to the Knappa congregation's new home at the First Lutheran church in Astoria.

The Knappa Immanuel Lutheran Church building later became the non-denominational Christian Church of Knappa, a partner of the Christian Church in Warrenton, and still serves as a venue for some local events.

The people of Brownsmead

Old time families in the Hill Country were named Anderson, Peterson, David, Aldrich, Erickson, Takalo, Blair, Raihala, Westerholm, Luoto, Lahti, Oja, Heikkila, Adolphson, Smith, Junttila, Hillstrom, and Carlson.

First families on the Island included Allen, Barendse, Butler, Eilers, Emken, Pentttila, Lebeck, Butterfield, McEntire, McCauley, Pedersen, DeJong, Schultz, and Gerttula.

There are some twenty roads that wind through Brownsmead, often following the meandering sloughs. The public roads generally are maintained by Clatsop County.

The main east-west road through Brownsmead is Ziak-Gnat Creek Road. The eastern end is the "new" access road from Highway 30 into Brownsmead and it runs along the old Larkin and Green logging railroad bed to the Gnat Creek Bridge. It continues all the way to Knappa Dock Road, at the west edge of Brownsmead.

The main north-south artery is Aldrich Point Road, which starts at the Gnat Creek Bridge and ends at Aldrich Point which juts out into the Columbia River. Many smaller roads and lanes lead off these two arteries.

For many years, Brownsmead was on Astoria's rural route 4 for mail delivery, and few roads in Brownsmead bore official names or road signs. The list below gives the current road names with a partial list of the families—past and present—who have lived on them. Multiple residents of a property are separated by a slash.

ALDRICH POINT ROAD

North from Gnat Creek Bridge Crossing, followed by the roads that connect to it.

- Net warehouse on dike by bridge (old Blind Slough store building, now dismantled)
- Float house: "Crippled" Jack Turno
- Blair (burned down)
- Cornish/Napier/Bakanen, Gary
- Erickson, Ed/ (corner of Sylvandale Road)/Smith/Moore
- Fishermen's warehouse built by Union Cannery 1928 and sold to fishermen's cooperative/Takalo and Westerholm.
- Kalander/Daffron/ Raihala, Denise/Kirby
- Takalo, Todd
- Hillstrom/Lahti, Hille/Cornish/ Takalo, Alan-Linda
- Hillstrom/Yrell/Estoos, Old parsonage: Pekkala/Estoos, Dale/Virginia/Jean
- Estoos, Dale/ (farm)
- Estoos, Ted/Maki, Arvo
- Immanuel Lutheran Church (dismantled, replaced with a residence)/ Rowles/Palensk/Culberg
- Sarampaa/Daffron/Engblom, Patty/Engblom, Troy
- Salmi
- Albert store (1901-17)/Borglund/ Peterson, Paul/Weller/Kallstrom, Paul
- Lahti, Armis
- Paronen
- Paronen, Carl
- Anderson
- Koski
- Palmrose
- Kalander, Emil/Palmrose, Walter
- Kalander, John
- Weronen/Lampi, Mel
- Hern
- Hagglund
- Lumijarvi/Sanders/Taggart
- Ruotsi/Gibson/Seal
- Hannu/Clark
- Lampi,George-Steve
- Erickson, Arthur
- Sutter/Weaver
- Hillstrom/Lahti/Carlson/Heikkinen
- Yrell
- Bostrom
- Carlson
- Aldrich

SYLVANDALE ROAD

also called Davis Bottom because it flooded before dikes were built.

- Perkins/Emil
- Perkins/Don/Smallie/Ramvick
- Takalo/Johnson, Hallie/Perkins
- Patson (burned)
- Sarkie, Joel
- Sarkie, Delbert/Ramvick, Monte
- Aarnio, Carl/ Heavenrich/ Raihala, Matti/Kurlinski.
- Aarnio, Carl/Aarnio, William/Seal
- Willman/Parrish/Poddar

- Willman, Ed/Laukkanen, Einar-Mike-Louie (farm)
- Algren/Laukkanen, Mike/Schneider
- Barendse, Clarence Sr./Clarence Jr. (Snooky)/Mitchell/Rusinovich
- Oja, Oney/Nielsen
- Sylvandale School/Nousen residence/ Nielsen (school under restoration)
- Heikkila
- Bay/Nauha
- Barendse, Clarence Sr.
- Bakkanen/Yeager
- Davis
- Empty house at end of road (burned)/Heikkala/Kostenko

ANDERSON LANE

- Downs/Oja, Arne/Rolly/ Anderson, Elton
- Juhlen/Peterson/Anderson, Gary
- Anderson, Gust/Anderson, Gary
- Osterburg
- Requa
- Herbst, Harold
- Green/Schliss/Pless
- Smith, Lou/Weirup
- Michelson, Victor-Mike/ Sutter/Devero, Sam-Jasper
- Luoto/McCool/Nikala/ Buckman (house burned)/ new house/Autio, Mike
- Hepo-oja, Able/Oja, Hedvig/Ordway
- Hillstrom
- Luoto
- Takalo/Mortberg/Senblom/ Twombly/Moore
- Bakkanen, Edwin/Palmrose, Walter/Heavenrich.
- Beckwith

OWL LANE

- Bergman/Spain/Embreacco/ Kim/Weaver
- Ikaheimo/Anderson, H./ Schumacher/Weaver, Ryan

PETERSON ROAD

- Fenton
- Peterson (tenant)/Kulberg (owner)/ Palmrose, Walter/Holt/Saklai
- Laurila, Frank
- Miller/Nygaard/Paler/Newman
- Booth, Pat/Baird/Neal
- Person
- Haggland
- Lystad
- Sutherland/Planski
- Niederton/Green/Stout/White
- Messing
- Johnson
- Shaw/Affholder
- Pamber/Seal

MUSTONEN ROAD

- Mustonen

ZIAK-GNAT CREEK ROAD

main east-west road, followed by the roads that connect to it.

- Darnell
- Gnat Creek Bridge Crossing: Raihala, Matt/Raihala, Reno (float house and farm house)/Raihala, Ray/ Christoffersson (wooded land)
- Smith/Savola (Burned down)
- Frost/Aho/Quist/Cagwin/Corcoran
- Raihala, Mary
- Raihala, Willie (two houses, the first burned)/Bennell/Mathers/Fenton
- Empo/Autio, Paul/Autio, Marvin-Nancy
- Lebeck, Sigurd/Emken, Melvin-Lonnie
- Posey/Hill/Baily/Bryan
- Lebo
- Saukko-Kangas, Aune-Gene
- Ringle/Van Artsdalen/Emken, Melvin
- Bernard
- Larsen/Anderson
- Lahti, Henry-Hilda-Lee and Stuart.
- Vanderveldt, Theodore (tempo- rary home while Grimstead and Vandereldt built area roads)
- Ziak, Robert-Gary

BLIND SLOUGH ROAD

to the railroad bridge

- Float houses
- Olsen, John/Richard/Rich
- Lundquist
- Sprogis
- Pearson
- Raistakka
- Land houses
- Railway bridge tender's house; later a new house: Olsen, John
- Tucker

- Floating duck shacks
- Kussman
- Duuos
- Graves
- Blind Slough store, north of rail- road bridge (later moved):
- Webster/Raihala, Matt

BROWNSMEAD HILL ROAD

Original access road into the community from old Highway 30.

- Boettcher's service station (log structure at the corner of old Highway 30)
- New development called Blackberry Lane under construction
- Kujala
- Maplewood Cemetery
- Posey/Daly/Bryan
- Knapp
- Clayton/Peitsch/Yarley
- Donnor
- Bridges/Morgan
- Westerholm/Olsen/Legerwood
- Juntilla

BROWNSMEAD DIKE ROAD

East from Grange Crossing.

- Polso
- Ikaheimo (Hugo)/Kelley
- Fowser/Barendse, Clarence/Parsonage: Pastors Koponen/Kangas/Anderson./ Allen, Curt/Green/Kinney
- Riitola
- Eilers
- Donaldson, Priscilla
- Allen, Leonard/Johnson
- Sullivan, Max
- Weller/Emken, Mel
- Saspal (also spelled Zaspal)
- Aarnio/Carl
- Borglund (float house)

BARENDSE ROAD

north from Blind Slough road bridge.

- Barendse, John-Ernie- Pete/Johnson, Lyle
- Emken, Anna & George
- Rhone, Elizabeth/Miller/Raney/ Kallstrom, Paul/Seaman
- Eilers

PENTILLA LANE (FROM BLIND SLOUGH ROAD BRIDGE)

- Float house
- Laurila, Frank "Snooby"/ Amsberry/Peitsch
- Fowser, Clayton
- Land houses
- Pentilla/Sarampa, William/ Kahn/Larson
- Pentilla
- Salmi/Cahill/Skiles/Miller/Weaver
- Kalander, John and Anna
- Float houses
- Raihala, Reno/Klindt.
- Raihala, Willie/Seloover
- Mendenhall
- Grimsrud
- Grizzley Slough exten- sion of Pentilla Lane
- Amsberry, Sterling/Barendse, Delwin/Carlton

JACKSON ROAD (NORTH FROM PENTILLA LANE)

- Westerholm, William "Sharkey"/Jon
- Quimby/Weaver, Craig/Delay
- McIntire/Westerholm, Jay/ Levine & Briggs
- Anderson, Elton
- Kangas, Fanny/Saukko, Leroy.

LEINO ROAD

- Leino
- Henry

GRANGE CROSSING

- Brownsmead Grange
- Brownsmead Store (part of which was originally a school, later a residence)
- Young/Nelman/Koski/Hart & Earsley/ Wharton/Campbell/Albers/Rice/Watts

SCHULTZ ROAD

- Schultz/Vosika

RUDAT ROAD (EAST FROM THE GRANGE CROSSING)

- Schultz
- McCauley
- Site of Brownsmead School
- Pederson/Fowser/Sterling/Moll/Gibler
- McCauley
- Corkill
- Riikonen
- Kallstrom. Herb/Sullivan
- Huld/White
- Hykko
- Minkoff, Jim/Johnson, Ed
- Rudat, Fred and Dorothy/Fred and Mary Jo/Smith, Albert/Engblom, Gene

GERTTULA ROAD
south from Rudat Road.

- Riikola/Piece
- Sture/Brownsmead Island Farm: Gerttula, John-Jalmar-Richard/ Metcalf/Rohne, Joe-Dirk

FISH LANE
North from Grange Crossing.

- Sorensen, Richard
- Barendse, Albert/Takalo, Roy, Opal/Smalley/Flaven
- Wharton/Fowser/McKessen
- Sorensen
- Herbst
- Vanderveldt/Kinley/Zurich
- Tufts
- Tufts, Jess/Engblom, Gene/ Wallace/Miethe
- Hedges/Moore
- Ives
- Fish, Al/Johnson, Ed
- Barendse, Ernest/Nyberg

PEOPLE WITH BROWNSMEAD CONNECTIONS, ADDRESSES UNKNOWN

- Bolder
- Butterfield
- Fick
- Hendrickson
- Karlson
- Lawter
- Lindstrom
- Longway
- Marshala
- Peck
- Quinn
- Stone
- Williamson
- Wilson
- Worsr
- Yadro
- Young

Brownsmead for the Ages

If you look carefully, parts of old Brownsmead are still there—the Grange hall, fishermen's warehouse, Brownsmead school/store, and Sylvandale school look much as they did nearly a century ago. Some of the older homes, such as those built by the Ojas, Raihalas, and others, still stand. Third and fourth-generation descendants of many old families still live in the community.

Some things are changing. Highway 30 has been straightened to provide for quick shopping trips to Astoria. The stores and the church are gone. But the community is still home to several going concerns: for example, the Autio Company manufactures grinding equipment, Dirk Rohne has a large dairy farm, and Gene Engblom raises beef cattle. However, residents are now more likely to work in healthcare, education, or technology, instead of logging, farming, or fishing.

Like the legendary Scottish village of Brigadoon, Brownsmead has a mystical quality. It is hard to find, unless you know where to look. Some say Brownsmead is not just a place, but a state of mind. Although small and off the beaten track, Brownsmead has a strong sense of place—its unofficial motto is "Center of the Universe."

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About the Author

Rea Raihala Christoffersson grew up in Brownsmead. First she lived in a float house on Blind Slough and then in the old Raihala house (built ca. 1910) at the junction of Brownsmead Hill and Aldrich Point Roads. She is a Brownsmead booster, contributing to the restoration of the Sylvandale school, and is a member of the Brownsmead Grange.

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